asertain the causes and circumstances attending the accident.

In the last three years, two Courts of Inquiry have been constituted in the case of the accident at New Kenda on 25.1.1994 and the inundation of Gaslitand group of mines on 26/27.9.1995. Both the Courts of Inquiry are yet to submit their reports.

[Translation]

Explosion in Hazaribagh

3239. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether an explosion took place in 35 pits of Eastparez coal mine near Hazaribagh Thana (Bihar) under BCCL on October 25, 1996;

(b) whether the several residential houses developed cracks due to that explosion as the mine security rules were not adhered to;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that no damage is done due to explosion in future to the residential houses which developed cracks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) As per information furnished by Coal India Limited (CIL), there is no coal mine named 35 pit of East Parez under Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL). However, there is an open cast mine named Parej East under Central Coalfields Limited (CCL). There has not been any explosion from this mine on 25th October, 1996.

(b) to (d). Do not arise in view of (a) above

[English]

Meeting on TRIPS and Patent Laws

3240. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that Parliamentarians Scientists and other concerned experts from 17 countries met in a conference in Delhi on November 14-15, 1996 to discuss the matter relating to Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and Patent Laws, on an invitation from the Forum of Parliamentarians on Intellectual Property Right;

(b) if so, the details of issues discussed in the conventions and the outcome thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). Yes, Sir. The issues discussed in the international conference related to Patent System, Foreign investment and emerging issues in WTO such as Labour Standards. The conference adopted a Declaration urging, inter-alia, the Governments of the developing countries to oppose any move to enlarge the scope of WTO through the introduction of new issues in the forth-coming Ministerial Meeting at Singapore. The Government has taken note of the deliberations in the Conference.

Cotton Corporation of India

3241. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the total loss incurred by Cotton Corporation of India for support price operation during 1995-96, and

(b) the loss recovered by Cotton Corporation of India by export of cotton during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) Since no price support operations were undertaken by the Cotton Corporation of India Ltd., during the year 1995-96, no losses were incurred.

(b) Does not arise.

Decline in Export to Russia

3242. SHRI G. VENKET SWAMY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether export to Russia has declined during the first four months of the current year especially of tea;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the remedial steps taken to boost the export during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The decline in India's overall export to Russian Federation during the first four months of the current financial year i.e., April-July, 1996 has been largely caused by inadequate and delayed allocation of rupee funds under the debt re-payment track, by the human authorities lack of adequate representation of Russian importing agencies with sufficient experience in terms of allocation of rupee funds for import of goods from India to Russia and the delay in issuance of irrevocable letters of credit by the Russian banks acting as a major disincentive to the Indian exports.

Lower export ot tea to Russian Federation has been on account of procedural problems resulting from rupee allocation system in Russia for importing goods from India by Russian Federation under the debt repayment mechanism. Due to the problem of rouble coverage from the Russian importers and high interest rates prevailing in Russia, the landed cost of Indian tea being exported under the debt repayment route is becoming uncompetitive.

(c) Both the Governments are interacting on regular basis towards enhancing bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Following the signing of the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement in 1992 and creation of bilateral inter Government Commission on Trade, Economic, Science, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, a series of agreements between the two countries have been signed and number of mechanisms have been set up to promote trade and economic cooperation. Steps have also been taken to enlarge Indo-Russian trade on consignment export basis through the warehouses and also ensuring greater presence of Indian banks in Russia. Both sides are also making efforts to promote bilateral trade through participation in trade fairs and exhibitions, exchange of trade information, etc.

Paper Industry

3243. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the paper industry at present is not progressing well;

(b) whether paper industry need heavy amount to meet growing demand of paper and paper board in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the extent to which the Government is likely to provide sufficient funds to boost the paper production in the country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) No,Sir. The country is broadly self-sufficient in the Production of paper.

(b) and (c). Yes, Sir. The per capita consumption of paper in the country is expected to go up from 32 kgs to 5 kgs by the end of the century. On the basis of letters of intent (LOIs) issued and Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandums (IEMs) filed, it is expected that an additional capacity of 19.96 lakh tonnes would be available to meet this growing demand.

(d) Under the existing policy dispensation, the paper industry is not reserved for public sector. The industry is also partially de-licenced. Investments are made by entrepreneurs based on their commercial perceptions.

Import of Coal

3244. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) the details of import of coal made by various power houses in the country during the last one year;

(b) whether the import of coal by power houses were made without utilising the coal from indigeneous coal fields; and

(c) if so, the facts and details thereof and the action the Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) As per the information made available by the Central Electricity Authority, a total of 1.831 million tonnes of imported coal was received by the power houses of Tamil Nadu in the year 1995-96. Another 1.332 million tonnes of imported coal has been received by these power stations in the year 1996-97.

(b) and (c). Under the present Export and Import Policy, coal can be freely imported into the country. Such imports of coal if any, are made by the consumers themselves considering their needs and exercising their own commercial judgement. The national coal companies are in a position to meet the entire requirements of the power stations in Tamil Nadu and adequate allocation to meet the entire requirements of these power stations are being maintained from indigenous sources.

Subsidy to Integrated Rural Development Programme

3245. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total amount of bank credit and Government subsidy provided to each State for the implementation of Integrated Rural Development Programme since its inception;

(b) the total number of families benefited therefrom till September, 1996;

(c) whether the impact of the programme had been uneven in regard to alleviation of poverty;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that the State-wise amounts of bank credit and Government subsidy under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) since its inception are not available with them. However, since the inception IRDP, bank credit of Rs. 16,797.86 crores and Government subsidy amounting to Rs. 10,550.56 crores, aggregating Rs. 27,348.42 crores had been provided to 494.98 lakh families below poverty line, till the end of September, 1996.

(c) and (d). The High Level Expert Committee on IRDP under the Chairmanship of Shri D.R. Mehta, former Deputy Government of RBI, has observed that large scale under-financing of IRDP beneficiaries in the initial years of the programme resulted in sub-optimal utilisation of assets and inadequate income generation which, in turn, had an uneven and adverse impact on the quality of lending in general and on recovery in particular.